Sparrows were the most aggressive and persistent competitors. They attempted to evict Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpeckers even before the latter completed their nesting, and in one instance before the excavation was complete. In most cases, nest-holes were almost immediately occupied (within a week) after the woodpeckers vacated nests. There was a demand for fresh holes because these are safer, harbouring fewer parasites and known to fewer competitors and predators (Short 1979, Van Balen *et al.* 1982, Sedgwick and Knopf 1992).

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13. SIGHTING OF BLACK-NAPED ORIOLE *ORIOLUS CHINENSIS* AND FRANKLIN'S PRINIA *PRINIA HODGSONII* IN SIRKALI, NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

Between January 26 and February 10, 2000, we carried out a survey of birds around villages in Sirkali taluka, Nagapattinam district, in the state of Tamil Nadu, south India. The habitats surveyed included wooded areas along rivers, grasslands, paddy fields, freshwater lakes, and coastal swamps. The villages are located along the Bay of Bengal coast, which is a major migratory route for birds leading to Point Calimere and onwards to Sri Lanka. We recorded a total of 113 species of birds, and two species, the Black-naped Oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*) and Franklin's Prinia (*Prinia hodgsonii*), were recorded for the first time from this area. The Black-naped Oriole was seen in a wooded area at a farm in Thittai village. It appears to be a rare winter visitor to India (Grimmett *et al.* 1999). Ali (1996) states that this species is an occasional winter visitor to the Peninsula, northeast India and Bangladesh. The Franklin's Prinia was very vocal as it rested on top of a bent grass blade in the paddy fields at sunset. The dark grey hood was almost like the Sardinian Warbler *Sylvia melanocephala*, and it contrasted markedly with the white belly unbarred by a grey breast-band. Its fantail was bordered with white spots disposed in scale. This species has not been seen in the area (Grimmett *et al.* 1999) and there is no mention of it in Ali (1996).

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14. RED-VENTED BULBUL *PYCNONOTUS CAFER* FEEDING BLACK DRONGO *DICRURUS MACROCERCUS* CHICKS

On a monsoon visit to the Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, India between July 4 and 15, 2001 we were amazed at the number of bird species nesting in a half acre patch around our research camp, near the Hinauta entrance barrier. Among those feeding their nestlings at that time were Indian Rollers (*Coracias*

benghalensis), Eurasian Golden Orioles (*Oriolus oriolus*), Black-headed Cuckoo-shrikes (*Coracina melanoptera*), White-browed Fantail-flycatchers (*Rhipidura aureola*), Red-vented Bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*) and Black Drongos (*Dicrurus macrocercus*). Yellow-eyed Babblers (*Chrysomma sinense*) were building a nest, and by July 14 three eggs had been laid. Rufous-backed Shrikes (*Lanius schach*) were also around, feeding chicks that had recently left their nest.

This patch contained approximately thirteen large and small Teak trees (*Tectona grandis*), eight *Lagerstroemia parviflora* trees, three *Diospyros melanoxylon* and one *Terminalia alata*, besides a few *Zizyphus* and *Lagerstroemia* bushes. The Rollers were nesting in a cavity in the *Terminalia*, the Orioles had hung their basket nest on the lower branches of the largest of the *Diospyros* and the Babbler was weaving its cone in a small *Zizyphus* bush. The others chose the shelter of two of the *Lagerstroemia* for their nest - the Fantail-flycatcher, Bulbul and Cuckoo-shrike shared the same 10 m high tree in ascending order, and the Drongo was in another similar sized tree, *c.* 20 m away. Ali and Ripley (COMPACT HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1987) say that some species, including orioles and bulbuls, "commonly build in the same tree as holds a Black Drongo's nest" as the latter is particularly forceful in its protection from other species. Perhaps this accounts for what seemed to be a relatively high density of nests in such a small patch. The White-browed Fantail-flycatcher is also a pugnacious defender of its territory.

Exact dates of hatching of the chicks are not recorded. By July 4, the Roller, Drongo and Oriole were all feeding chicks. The roller's chicks could not be seen and the adults proved too shy to watch closely. The Oriole's three chicks were still small and unfeathered, but the Drongo's three were already partially fledged. The fantails were first seen feeding on July 9 and the three chicks had probably only recently hatched.

The Cuckoo-shrikes' nest was spotted on July 11, although the adults had been seen carrying food a few days earlier. The bulbuls were first seen feeding only on July 15, and it seemed likely that these chicks were also recently hatched.

The Black Drongos were nesting at the fork of a branch approximately 4 m from the ground. Although I had been watching the nest off and on since my arrival and even spent time photographing them, I only saw the Bulbul come to the Drongo nest in the early morning of July 8. I cannot say for sure that it began on this day, as I was watching opportunistically and could possibly have missed it earlier. But the Drongo parents - both were feeding the chicks - were aggressive in chasing the Bulbul off when it came near the nest. The Bulbul developed a strategy of waiting nearby until both Drongo parents had fed their chicks, and then slipping in unobtrusively before they returned with the next food supply. Its arrival at the nest would herald a round of begging and it would feed a Drongo chick. On this first day, I also saw the Bulbul chase off the Yellow-eyed Babbler that was moving close to the nest tree. The Bulbul continued to feed the Drongo chicks every day after this, and we were able to photograph and film it doing so. By the evening of July 9, the two larger Drongo chicks were outside the nest and hopping along the branch; on July 10 these two were moving among the upper and lower branches of the tree, although all three were in or next to the nest by evening. The Bulbul continued to partake in the feeding. By midday of July 11, the third chick had also left the nest and from July 12 onwards, all three had left the nest tree and were moving in the neighbouring Teak trees which afforded them more cover — also from the rain. The Bulbul continued to bring food and feed them and the chicks continued to beg when they saw it nearby. The Drongo parents appeared to have got used to this arrangement too, and I saw no more aggression directed towards the Bulbul by them. Indeed, on July 12 evening, two of the chicks were sitting fairly close together and I saw one of the Drongo adults and the Bulbul on either side, hardly two feet apart, feeding almost simultaneously. The Bulbul was still following the three Drongo chicks around (by now there was no doubt of their parentage) and feeding them when we departed on July 15.

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15. REDISCOVERY OF THE YELLOW-THROATED BULBUL *PYCNONOTUS XANTHOLAEMUS* IN THE ANAIMALAI HILLS, WESTERN GHATS, SOUTH INDIA

The Yellow-throated Bulbul (*Pycnonotus xantholaemus*) is uncommon and patchily distributed in South India (Grimmett *et al.* 1998, Ali and Ripley 1971). The species is classified as vulnerable because of extensive removal of its prime habitat, fuelwood extraction and quarrying (BirdLife International 2000, Collar *et al.* 1994).

In the Anaimalai Hills, the Yellow-throated Bulbul